

Writing Resources

What is “good” writing instruction? Assigning is not instructing.

From the National Writing Project website: “The chart below highlights differences that occur when writing is simply *assigned* and when writing is authentically *taught*. It has been adapted and excerpted from [Because Writing Matters](#), a book the National Writing Project coauthored with journalist Carl Nagin on the status of writing instruction in America.”

| When Writing is Assigned | When Writing is Taught |
|--|---|
| Students are asked to write only on the teacher's topics. | Students have opportunities to create topics that matter to them. |
| The teacher selects writing topics for papers without consideration of audience and purpose. | Audience and purpose for papers are specifically identified in assignments. |
| Most of a teacher's time is spent correcting papers. | Most of a teacher's time is spent in class teaching writing skills and strategies. |
| Students are asked to analyze, compare, describe, narrate, review, and summarize, without the strategies to successfully complete these tasks. | Students are given writing models, assignments, and strategies to guide each of their different writing tasks. |
| Students are not aware of significant improvement in their writing. | Students reflect on significant growth—or lack of it—in specific writing skills. |
| Students are required to rewrite—in some cases. But rewriting usually is limited to correcting grammar, usage, etc. | Students are encouraged to revise, edit, and improve—and to correct drafts and then resubmit. |
| Students are required to write without much forethought. | Students think about what they write through brainstorming, freewriting, role-playing, discussion or other prewriting activities. |
| Students and teachers are bored by what students write. | Students and teachers are excited about what students write and make efforts to display and publish it. |

Writing instruction includes opportunities for choice, collaboration, pre-writing, drafting, reflecting, revising, and publishing. Assignments specify audience and purpose. Teachers offer models, feedback, and appropriate mini-lessons.

Writing Modes—Narrative, Descriptive, Expository, Persuasive
Emphasize expository and persuasive writing.

Writing Resources:

IDOE website for standards and lesson plans: <http://doe.state.in.us>

1. Click ASAP at top of home page. Click Academic Standards. At first red arrow question, pull down screen and select English Language Arts. Select grade level and standard. Click Resources.

OR

2. At top of IDOE home page in left column under “Top Web Areas,” click Academic Standards. Go to English/Language Arts. Select grade level and standard. Click Resources.

Advanced Placement www.apcentral.collegeboard.com

Jim Burke www.englishcompanion.com (Everything!)

Jane Schaeffer www.janeschaeffer.com (AP writing and literature study guides)

Kim’s Korner for Teacher Talk <http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com>

Lesson Plans: <http://www.lessonplanspage.com>

PBS Teacher Source: <http://pbs.org/teachersource>

Web English Teacher <http://www.webenglishteacher.com> (Included in ReadWriteThink below) Excellent website by Carla Beard, an Indiana teacher

ReadWriteThink (IRA/NCTE/MarcoPolo) Lessons, Standards, Web Resources, and Student Materials: <http://www.readwritethink.org/resources/index.asp> Some of the links are listed below:

National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement

<http://cela.albany.edu/>

This site provides research, a newsletter, links, and teaching resources, such as learning materials and online journals. It also includes examples of research-to-practice booklets like *Improving Literacy Understanding Through Classroom Conversation*.

Professional Development

National Writing Project

<http://www.writingproject.org/>

The National Writing Project (NWP), based at the U. of California-Berkeley, is a network of 150 sites, each representing a school/university partnership. The site has a wealth of professional development resources for teachers of writing at all levels, primary through college, including online discussion lists (Urban and Rural, also Teacher Inquiry), author-led seminars, and a regularly updated “NWP Interactive.”

Professional Development

Guys Read: A Literacy Initiative from Jon Scieszka

<http://www.guysread.com/>

This site’s mission is “to offer leadership, practical solutions, a forum, and support to get guys reading.” The site includes Favorite Books for Guys, What You Can Do, and Guys Speak.

Instructional Resources, Professional Development

Publishing with Students

<http://www.publishingstudents.com/>

This website gives practical advice to teachers interested in helping students publish their writing. The site includes links to websites that focus on student writing and publishing, a page for teachers to exchange ideas, and a list of award programs and writing competitions for students.

Instructional Resources

RubiStar

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.shtml>

RubiStar is a tool for teachers to create rubrics without starting from scratch. Rubrics are available on a variety of teaching topics and are customizable. RubiStar can also analyze data for an entire class to determine problem

areas, and teachers can return and edit their rubrics at any time.

Instructional Resources

techLEARNING

<http://www.techlearning.com/content/working/>

Home to Technology & Learning Magazine, this site has hundreds of articles written by K-12 teachers, administrators, and other experts in the field, who give practical, firsthand advice on how to effectively integrate technology into the classroom.

Instructional Resources

Textmapping Project

<http://www.textmapping.org/>

Textmapping is a graphic organizer technique used to teach reading comprehension and writing skills, study skills, and course content.

Instructional Resources, Professional Development

The Write Site

<http://writesite.org/>

The Write Site provides resources on journalism, from generating leads, gathering facts, and writing stories.

Instructional Resources, Student Resources

Topics: An Online Magazine for Learners of English

<http://www.topics-mag.com/>

This online magazine is a wealth of cultural information for students learning about other countries. It also invites English learners to write articles about where they're from and encourages them to sharpen their language skills in the Language Corner. The Teachers' Corner highlights ESL Web projects and teaching techniques from around the world.

Instructional Resources, Reference Library, Student Resources

Web English Teacher

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/>

The Web English Teacher presents the best of K-12 English/Language Arts teaching resources: lesson plans, WebQuests, videos, biography, e-texts, criticism, jokes, puzzles, professional development and classroom activities.

Instructional Resources, Professional Development **

Writing Fix

<http://www.writingfix.com>

Sponsored in part by the National Writing Project, the Writing Fix features interactive writing activities and activities to engage all types of learners. This site includes tools, games, lessons on conventions, and areas for publishing.

Instructional Resources, Student Resources

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES

1. Secondary Edition of Write Connections published by the Buddy System Project, sponsored by Indiana Department of Education
<http://www.thewritingsite.org/list/form.asp>
2. Indiana Humanities Council smartDESKTOP resource providers
<http://resource.smartdestop.org> goes directly to resources and does not require an account. For a free account: <http://indianahumanities.org/smartdesktop> and click link to Resource Connection.
3. For quick grammar tests: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar>

4. “Where I’m from poem” and other ideas
<http://712educators.about.com/cs/writingessays/a/comparecontrast/htm>
5. Links to handouts and syllabi of Pat Schulze’s classes including Cyber English
<http://ps044.k12.sd.us>
6. Information about open source technology <http://www.technologysource.org> or <http://www.opensourcecms.com> or <http://www.opensource.weblogsiac.com> or <http://oswd.org> or osportfolio.org or Google “open source” I’m unsure about some of these addresses—sorry!
7. Free resources for English and Language Arts from ACE (Assembly on Computers in English) workshop 11/21/05 part of NCTE conference in Pittsburgh
List from Michael Day, Chair, Committee on Computers in Composition and Communication <http://www.engl.niu.edu/mday/ace2005free.html>
8. <http://www.monsterexchange.org> for writing description exercise

What are some online writing tools to enhance “good writing instruction”?

Spell checks and grammar checks
Criterion/MyAccess
Inspiration
Others...

Some helpful strategies:

Kathy Richter: After each writing, reflect. What did you learn about your writing from this paper? How can you improve next time?
Mark Fuson: Choice in the writing lab
Criterion teachers: Use Criterion’s colors to comment about organization (Introductions—blue; Thesis—red; Main Idea—green; Supporting details—teal; Conclusion—yellow)
Students use the ISTEP rubric to peer- and self-evaluate.
Students write a score point 1 paper through a score point 6 paper. (See *ISTEP+ Teacher’s Scoring Guide* or AP books.)
Others...

Do you have some personal favorite resource books?

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading, And Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann. 1998.

Burke, Jim. *Writing Reminders: Tools, Tips, and Techniques*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2003.

----- *The English Teacher’s Companion: A Complete Guide to Classroom,*

Curriculum and the Profession. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook. 1999.

----(He has a new one out with graphic organizers.)

Christenbury, Leila. *Making the Journey Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann. 2002.

Culham, Ruth and Amanda Wheeler. *Writing to Prompts in the Trait-Based Classroom Literature Response, Prompts that Provide all the Elements Students Need to Start Writing: A role, Audience, Format, Topic, and Strong Verb (R.A.F.T.S.)*. New York: Scholastic. 2003.

Fletcher, Ralph and JoAnn Portalupi. *Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton. 2001.

_____. *What a Writer Needs*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1993.

Gere, Anne Ruggles, Leila Christenbury and Kelly Sassi. *Writing on Demand, Best Practices and Strategies for Success*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2005.

Jago, Carol. *Beyond Standards: Excellence in the High School English Class*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook. 2001.

Marzano, Robert J. and Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock. *Classroom Instruction that Works, Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 2001.

National Writing Project and Carl Nagin. *Because Writing Matters*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, John Wiley & Son, Inc. 2003.

Romano, Tom. *Crafting Authentic Voice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2004.

Spandel, Vicki. *Creating Writers Through 6-Trait Writing Assessment and Instruction*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman. 2001.

Zemelman, Steven, Harvey Daniels and Arthur Hyde. *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1998.

_____. *A Community of Writers, Teaching Writing in the Junior and Senior High School*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1988.

English Journal and *Classroom Notes Plus* published by NCTE are helpful periodicals.

Barry Lane and Lola Schaefer are recommended by Dr. Mary Andis, IDOE.

Janet Angelillo, Carl Anderson, Randy Bomer, Katie Wood Ray, and Constance Weaver are recommended by Dr. Beth Berghoff, IUPUI School of Education.

STRATEGIES FOR RAISING ASSESSMENT SCORES

Teach the standards.

- Integrate several standards and indicators in the same lesson.
- Help students feel comfortable with the terminology.
- Offer a rich curriculum with best practices.

Read more.

- Be word conscious. (Prepare for challenging vocabulary in a selection. Write sentences with new words. Illustrate the word. Involve all the senses.)
- Read various genres and disciplines—biographies; essays about science, the arts, history; news reports and editorials.
- Write responses to reading. (Before, during, after activities)
- Respond to literature. (Address indicators; use terminology.)
- Discuss readings.

Write more.

- See “Ideas for Using the Computer” in this packet.
- Use ISTEP+ rubric for evaluation.
- Examine anchor papers in Scoring Guides as models. (ISTEP+ and AP)
- Evaluate anchor papers using ISTEP+ rubric and discuss scores.
- Self- and peer-evaluate using ISTEP+ rubric.
- Use evaluation software.

Prepare students for the test format.

- Check with publishers for test prep practice books.
- Practice answering on a separate answer sheet similar to ISTEP+’s answer sheet.
- Set up your own assessments in ISTEP+ format—multiple choice, open-ended responses, essays. Use the ISTEP+ rubric to grade essays.
- Do timed-writings. Encourage students to write more and to elaborate with specific details.
- Use graphic organizers. (Use Venn diagrams for comparisons. See Jim Burke’s new book, *Tools for Thought*, published by Heinemann.)

Teach to organize and develop.

- Explain narration, exposition, and persuasion.
- Introduction, body, conclusion
- Don’t list; develop with specific details.

-Vary whole group, small group, individual work, learning centers, and collaboration.

-Don’t make test preparation your program. Work on the format throughout the year and prior to the test.

-Remind students, “Remember, we’ve worked on this!”

HOW DO I BEGIN?

SOME WAYS TO USE THE COMPUTER IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Brainstorm
- Take notes
- Calendars, assignment log
- Reading logs—list, respond, connect
- Outside reading record (titles, authors, comments)
- Journals
- Entrance—questions, reactions, favorite passage
- Exit—summary, questions, response
- Before, During, After (Prior knowledge/set purpose/ predict; Monitor comprehension/construct meaning; Savor/share/reconstruct/connect
- Paraphrase
- Write sentences or stories using vocabulary words
- Sentence combining
- “Show; don’t tell” exercises
- Respond to a peer’s paper
- Timed writings
- Edit using spelling and grammar check or evaluation software like Criterion or MyAccess
- Mini-lessons: vivid descriptions, effective use of dialogue, engaging introductions, conclusions, focus, voice, compression of poetic language, manipulation of structure to reinforce meaning, use of transitions as conceptual connecting devices (from *Best Practices*, p. 72)
- If doing literature circles, have one person document the roles (Discussion Director, Literary Luminary, Vocabulary Enricher, Illustrator, Connector)
- Power Point
- Clip art, visuals
- Chart growth/improvement in writing
- Think/write about your writing (metacognition)
- Write a note to the teacher
- Write for two different audiences
- Internet searches
- Research
- Portfolios
- Check readability of a paragraph or essay to improve diction and sentence structure. (Place cursor at the top of a Word document and click Tools. Click Spelling and Grammar and click Ignore, Check Show Readability. Click OK, click Ignore all. The statistics should pop up. Students learn at what reading level they are writing. This result can encourage them to use a more precise vocabulary and to use more complex sentences.)
- And.....please e-mail me ideas to add to this list and to share with others.